

Axminster Urban  
Axminster Rural  
Honiton Borough  
Honiton Rural  
Seaton Urban

Annual Report  
OF THE  
**Medical Officer of Health**  
FOR  
**No. 2 SANITARY AREA**  
**DEVON**

---

**1952**

---

Medical Officer of Health—Duncombe Steele-Perkins

	Sanitary Inspector	Surveyor
Axminster Urban	... L. H. White	F. J. Smith
Axminster Rural	... L. H. White	F. J. Smith
Honiton Borough	... R. B. Bailey	R. B. Bailey
Honiton Rural	... F. J. Baxfield	F. J. Baxfield
Seaton Urban	... P. Bradley	P. Bradley



# Annual Report

## for No. 2 Sanitary Area for 1952,

comprising :—

AXMINSTER URBAN, AXMINSTER RURAL, HONITON BOROUGH,  
HONITON RURAL, AND SEATON URBAN.

DUNCOMBE STEELE-PERKINS, *Med. Officer of Health.*

---

I have much pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1952, and which deals with the general Health and Sanitary matters affecting the No. 2 Sanitary Area.

The year 1952 was in very marked contrast with 1951, in the remarkable decline in the number of Notifiable Infectious Disease reported to me, and no doubt was somewhat due, especially in the case of Measles, to the very extensive epidemic of Measles in 1951, which more or less for the time being, immunised all the children from further attacks.

In 1951, 1,180 cases of Measles were notified, as compared with 13 in 1952, and it is interesting to compare the figures in my five Areas.

		1951	1952
Honiton Rural	...	188	3
Axminster Rural	...	461	2
Honiton Borough	...	199	6
Seaton Urban	...	105	2
Axminster Urban	...	227	0
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		1180	13

We were again very fortunately spared any serious outbreak of Poliomyelitis, or more commonly known as Infantile Paralysis. In all, four cases of the Paralytic type were reported; two cases in the Axminster Rural; and two cases in the Honiton Rural. These cases were all transferred to Whipton Isolation Hospital, and subsequently to the Princess Elizabeth Orthopædic Hospital for further treatment.

I am again very glad to report that no cases of Diphtheria were reported during the year, and for many years now we have been absolutely free of this Disease.

Other Infectious Diseases will be dealt with under the separate Area Reports, but I would like here to draw attention to the wonderful record of Axminster Urban during 1952, and which is a

record, which I think, has never been equalled before in the whole of the United Kingdom, and that was that during 1952 not a single case of Infectious Disease was recorded in the Area.

During the year, the South Western Regional Hospital Board sent their Mass Radiography Service to Axminster. This is the first time such a service has been held in my Area, and I very much welcome their visit, and trust it will become an Annual Clinic. As the Examination is purely voluntary, I was exceedingly pleased with the large number of people who took advantage of the service. The general public are, as a rule, very nervous of attending such a Clinic for fear of what might be found, but I would point out that the majority of people who were X-rayed were all youngsters, and by that I mean under the age of 30, and this is where the service is so useful, in that in the majority of cases where a small Lesion is found, it is odds on that the case can be cured in its early stages, and that is why the service to the Public is so extremely valuable. The number of cases X-rayed at Axminster were:—Male, 438; Female, 346; Total—784. I will deal more fully with the Mass Radiography under Axminster Urban Report.

During the year, we had at Beer, the first serious outbreak of Food Poisoning which I have ever had to deal with. The cause of the outbreak was due to a Chef employed in a General Stores at Sidmouth being a carrier, and the fact that he was a carrier, quite unknown to himself or his employer, just shows how those who handle food for the general public must be particularly careful in their general hygiene. Briefly, the case was that this man made half a dozen meat pies for a shop at Beer. These were sold at once, and within a few hours I had seven people down with extremely grave symptoms of Food Poisoning. I sent all except one case to Whipton Hospital, where after prolonged treatment they recovered with the exception of one case, which unfortunately died in Hospital. The case remaining at Beer gave me a lot of trouble, as I had him under observation with his Doctor for over six months before I could finally permit him to return to work. I would say here, that he was offered Hospital treatment, but refused.

I would here like to express my very grateful thanks to the Medical Officer of Health for Sidmouth, Colonel Perry, for the very great co-operation and assistance he gave me in tracking this outbreak down, also to the Devon County Authorities, who through Dr. Moore of the Public Health Laboratory Service, went to a vast amount of work and trouble in locating the source of the outbreak, which after weeks of exhaustive inquiries and work he pinned down the source to a carrier in a large store, whose hands became infected after using the Lavatory.

During the year a large number of Sewage Schemes have been planned and put up to the Ministry for sanction, but owing to the financial stringency we have not been able to go forward with a large number of very urgent minor schemes for the Villages in our Area. Some of these, especially Musbury, Membury, Kilmington and Wilmington are extremely urgent, and should be tackled the moment the financial position is improved. However, we can be very satisfied that the large scheme at Beer, costing approximately £83,310, has been sanctioned and is well under construction. This, I feel sure, will be an immense boon to Beer, and once and for all clean up the dreadful state the Beer Beach has always been in, and also we shall now be able to carry out a large scheme of building there.

### **Water Supplies.**

The East Devon Water Board has now taken over the Water supplies in the Area, and are now responsible for the various schemes which formerly came through my department, and I am rather out of touch with the work of the Board, except that I receive a copy of their Minutes for perusal, but it seems I now have very little say in the water supplies of the Area, and consequently am losing touch with the water supplies of the District in general, unless anything very radically goes wrong. However, the Kilmington, Musbury and Shute Scheme is now functioning, and a very great boon it is, also the small scheme at Northleigh has been completed.

### **Caravans and Mobile Canteens.**

The very great increase in Caravans, and a still larger increase to be expected, is going to be a matter of grave concern to the District, as regards water supplies and sewage disposal, and this of course must be linked up with specified sites for camping, otherwise we are going to have indiscriminate camping all over the District. The only solution I can see is to allocate certain sites for this purpose, where arrangements for sewage and water supplies can be made.

The same question also arises with Mobile Canteens, which no doubt have come to stay, and serve a very useful purpose, but at the present moment we have no power to allocate them definite sites where proper Sanitary services could be installed. At the present moment they can operate anywhere, provided they are not causing any obstruction on the road. It is really a National question, and should be dealt with thoroughly by an Act of Parliament.

Housing has made great strides, and with the coming now of free enterprise building, the heavy calls on the Local Authority should now diminish year by year. However, we have done a job throughout the whole of my Area which we can be justly proud of.

## AXMINSTER URBAN.

Area	...	...	...	667 acres
Population	...	...	...	2,667
Rateable Value	...	...	...	£22,565
Penny Rate produces	...	...	...	£91 0s. 0d.

### Infectious Disease.

			1951	1952
Measles	...	...	239	0
Diphtheria	...	...	0	0
Whooping Cough	...	...	1	0
Scarlet Fever	...	...	0	0
Para Typhoid	...	...	0	0
Erysipelas	...	...	0	0
Pneumonia	...	...	7	0
Puerpural Pyrexia	...	...	0	0
Poliomyelitis	...	...	0	0
Ophth. Neon.	...	...	0	0
			247	0

### Deaths.

Number of Deaths registered from all causes :—

1951—(14 Males, 28 Females)	...	...	42
1952—(15 Males, 17 Females)	...	...	32

### Live Births.

Number of Births registered :—

1951—(20 Males, 15 Females) and includes 2 illegitimate births	...	...	35
1952—(24 Males, 21 Females) and includes 1 illegitimate birth	...	...	45

### Still Births.

Number of above registered :—

1951—(0 were registered)	...	...	0
1952—(1 was registered)	...	...	1

### Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

1951—2 Deaths were registered	...	...	2
1952—0 Deaths were registered	...	...	0

### Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age.

1951—2 deaths were registered (1 Male, 1 Female)	...	...	2
1952—0 deaths were registered	...	...	0

*Deaths.*—The number of Deaths registered were 32, as against 42 in 1951, and the causes of death were as follows:—

		1951	1952
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	2	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	...	2	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	...	0	0
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	3	5
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	...	7	5
Coronary Disease, Angina	...	5	3
Other Heart Disease	...	6	2
Other Circulatory Disease	...	1	1
Influenza ...	...	1	0
Nephritis ...	...	0	1
Other Defined and ill-Defined Diseases	...	3	0
Bronchitis	...	4	1
Diabetes ...	...	1	0
Hypertension with Heart Disease ...	...	3	5
Pneumonia	...	1	2
Congenital Malformation	...	1	0
Accidental Deaths	...	2	0
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	...	0	2
Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	...	0	2
Hyperplasia of Prostate	...	0	1
		42	32

*Births.*—The Births show an increase, 45 births as against 35 in 1951, and I have to record 1 illegitimate birth.

#### **Infectious Disease.**

One can only look at the chart of Infectious Disease with utter amazement, and one is at a loss for words to comment on such an amazing achievement. As you will see, not a single case of Infectious Disease was recorded during 1952, and Axminster Urban can be very proud of the fact that, as far as I know, no such record has ever been achieved before in any area of the British Isles. When the time comes to hand over and unite with the Rural District in April, 1953, they can be very proud indeed of the fine record they have set up.

No doubt a contributing factor to the absence of Measles was that in 1951 they, in common with all other Districts, had a very bad outbreak of Measles, and this no doubt immunised a large proportion of the infant population to any further serious outbreak.

#### **Mass Radiography.**

As I pointed out in my opening remarks, the South-Western Regional Hospital Board sent their Mass Radiography Service to Axminster for the first time, and I was delighted to welcome the Unit, and took the advantage of attending several of their Clinics.

As there is always a certain amount of fear and prejudice, more the former than the latter, I was exceedingly pleased with the attendance, and the patients were drawn from all classes of Society.

In all a total of 784 people attended, made up of—Male 438, Female 346. The results were extraordinarily good, and I am appending the chart sent me by the Clinic, which shows that only two active cases were discovered, and one of these was recommended for Sanatorium treatment and the other for Dispensary treatment.

Of the inactive cases, there were 17. Two required no action to be taken, 10 recommended to see their own doctor for treatment, and five recommended for observation at the Dispensary.

As by the time this report will be published and issued to the Urban District Councillors, the Council will be uniting with the Rural District, and I would like to say farewell to my old Council, and to express my very deep gratitude to all the Councillors for the very great kindness and consideration shown to me during my term of office. Having been appointed their Medical Officer of Health in October, 1938, I can say without hesitation I have been very happy indeed in my work with you, and we have never had the slightest friction of any kind, and I wish those of you who now join the Rural District Council great happiness in your work, as I know we shall all pull exceedingly well together.

### Mass Radiography Chart.

Report of Survey at Axminster during the period March, 1952.

#### *Tuberculous Conditions.*

	Male	Female	Total	Disposal			
	Male	Female	Total	N.A.	Dr.	Disp.	San.
Miniature Films	438	346	784				
Large Films—Total Recalled	27	13	40				
Did not attend	3	2	5				
Normal	7	5	12				
Significant	17	6	23				
Under Observation							
Active—							
Primary Lesion							
Post-Primary unilateral							
Post Primary							
bilateral	1	1	2				
Tuberculous pleural							
effusion							
Total	1	1	2				
Inactive—							
Primary Lesion	2	2	2	2			
Post-Primary Lesion	11	4	15		10	5	
Total	13	4	17	2	10	5	

N.A.—No Action. Dr.—Patient's own doctor. Disp.—Under observation at Dispensary. San.—Sanitorium treatment required.

*Analysis of Tuberculous Cases.*

Age—Under 15	15/24	25/34	35/44	45/59	60 and over	Total
--------------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------------	-------

**Active Tuberculosis—**

Male				1	1
Female		1			1
	Total		1	1	2
	Inactive Tuberculosis—				
Male	3	2	7	1	13
Female		1	2	1	4
	Total	3	3	2	17

Cases previously detected (included in Tables above)—Nil.

*Non-Tuberculous Conditions.*

		Male	Female	Total
Bronchitis and Emphysema	...	1		1
Pulmonary Fibrosis	..	1		1
Basal Fibrosis	...	1		1
Acquired Cardiac Lesion	...		1	1
	Total	...	3	4

**Sanitary Inspector's Report.**

I have much pleasure in presenting the report of my Sanitary Inspector, Mr. White.

**Meat and other Foods.**

Killing and inspection is still being carried out at the regional Abattoir at Tiverton. Efforts are being made for the eventual scheduling of an Abattoir in the Axminster district, and it is hoped that these activities will result in the eventual siting, planning, and building of an Abattoir in this district. During the year several inspections have been made at food shops and stores, and the following was condemned:—Tin Food, 488lbs. ; Home-killed Meat, 316lbs. ; Imported Meat, 315lbs.

**Refuse Collection.**

A twice-weekly Refuse Collection still continues, and tipping is carried out at the Rural Dump. It is hoped that with amalgamation this lorry might do more useful work in the new district, and possibly supplement the existing collections.

**Rodent Control.**

For an eight-month period during the year there was no Rodent Control Operator. Necessary treatments and sewer maintenance was carried out by my department in spite of this, and towards the end of the year a Rodent Operator was appointed.

## Housing.

Steady progress has continued with new house building, but there is a dearth of sites for residential purposes for private enterprise building.

### Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year

1. Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	39
2. Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... ... ...	5
3. Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	1
Remedy of defects without service of formal notices ...	15
Remedy of defects with service of formal notice ...	1

### Verminous Premises.

It has not been necessary to treat any premises for vermin.

### Factories' Act, 1937.

Factories	No. on Register	No. of Inspections	Informal Notices served
Mechanical ...	28	20	4
Non-Mechanical ...	9	5	1
	—	—	—
Total ...	37	25	5
Particulars	Defects found	Defects remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector
Want of Cleanliness ...	4	4	-
Sanitary Convenience :			
1. Unsuitable ...	-	-	-
2. Not separate for Sexes	-	-	-
3. Insufficient ...	1	1	-
4. Other Offences ...	-	-	-
	—	—	—
Total ...	5	5	-

### General Inspections.

Dairies ...	...	...	...	1
Disinfection following Infectious Disease	...	...	...	0
Inspection of Drains ...	...	...	...	10
Food and Drugs Act, Section 14 ...	...	...	...	8
Condemned Food, Visits and Re-visits...	...	...	...	67
Petroleum Inspections ...	...	...	...	16
Shops Act ...	...	...	...	14
Miscellaneous (Explosives, Requisitioned Houses, &c.)	...	...	...	3
Inspections, Public Health Act, Section 91, &c. ...	...	...	...	37

# AXMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT.

Area	...	...	51,468 acres
Population	...	...	11,480
Rateable Value	...	...	£60,967
Penny Rate produces	...	...	£248
No. of Parishes	...	...	14

### Deaths.

1951—(77 Males, 79 Females)	...	...	156
1952—(78 Males, 83 Females)	...	...	161

### Live Births.

1951—(82 Males, 71 Females)	...	...	153
	6 illegitimate births were registered and are included in the above total of 153.		
1952—(79 Males, 68 Females)	...	...	147
	3 illegitimate births were registered and are included in the above total of 147.		

### Still Births.

1951—2 Still Births were registered	...	...	2
1952—2 Still Births were registered	...	...	2

### Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

1951—5 Deaths were registered (1 illegitimate)	...	5
1952—3 Deaths were registered (0 illegitimate)	...	3

### Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age.

1951—4 Deaths were registered, including 1 illegitimate	4
1952—3 Deaths were registered (0 illegitimate)	3

### Infectious Disease.

The following cases of Infectious Disease were notified in 1952 :—

		1951	1952
Measles	...	462	2
Pneumonia	...	8	5
Diphtheria	...	0	0
Whooping Cough	...	4	59
Scarlet Fever	...	7	4
Erysipelas	...	2	0
Typhoid	...	0	0
Puerpural Pyrexia	...	0	0
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	0	2
Dysentery	...	0	0
Food Poisoning	...	0	7
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		101	79

### Infectious Disease.

With the exception of a small outbreak of Whooping Cough, 59 cases in all, and the seven cases of Food poisoning at Beer, I think we can be very well satisfied with the year's record, and which is very much above the average for several years.

I have dealt very fully with the Food poisoning cases in my opening remarks, and in order to lessen the chances of any further outbreaks, I am going to circularise all Food establishments, &c., during the summer months. This will consist of a washable Plastic Food Notice, drawing attention to all food handlers, the necessity of cleanliness and in particular, the washing of hands. I think this may do quite a lot of good, as being of Plastic Material, it will be a permanent notice which will not become dirty, and I hope will always be hitting the eyes of those who handle Food.

*Deaths.*—These shew a slight increase for the District, 161 compared with 156 in 1951.

The chief causes of death in the Area were :—		1951	1952
Respiratory Tuberculosis	...	1	1
Other Infective and Parasitic Disease	...	0	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	3	7
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	...	1	5
Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	...	2	1
Malignant Neoplasm, Bronchus	...	1	3
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	17	16
Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System	...	25	21
Coronary Disease, Angina	...	21	18
Hypertension with Heart Disease...	...	5	3
Other Heart Disease ...	...	28	36
Other Circulatory Disease	...	6	9
Influenza ...	...	2	1
Pneumonia	...	4	3
Bronchitis	...	7	6
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	...	9	0
Duodenal Ulcer	...	3	0
Gastritis and Diarrhoea	...	2	0
Nephritis ...	...	2	1
Hyperplasia of Prostate	...	2	4
Childbirth Abortion	...	0	0
Congenital Malformation	...	1	1
Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	...	9	17
Motor Accidents	...	4	5
All other Accidents	...	0	1
Suicide ...	...	0	0
Leukaemia	...	1	0
Diabetes	...	0	2
		156	161

*Births.*—These remain a little below the average, 147 as against 153 in 1951, and include 3 illegitimate births.

### **Water Supplies.**

The East Devon Water Board is now fully functioning, and I am rather out of touch with the plans of the Board for the fuller development of the water supplies of the Area, but I am delighted to see, at long last, Musbury, Kilmington and Shute are now all linked up with the Lyme Regis Water Supply.

### **Sewerage.**

With the coming of Water supplies to our Villages, we shall now be faced with heavy increased expenditure in providing Sewage Schemes for our Villages which go on to Main supplies of Water. Some of these Village schemes are really most urgent, and I think the worst situated Village is Musbury, which requires very urgent attention, and will be much worse now they are linked up with a Water supply from the Main.

In fact, it is rather difficult to name a Village which does not require a better system of Sewage disposal, and there is no doubt the moment the financial situation becomes easier we shall have to push ahead with the worst of our Villages.

I am indeed glad to think that the Beer Scheme, costing £83,000, is on its way to completion. It is an enormous expenditure of money, but will be a very valuable asset to Beer, and I have no doubt Beer will now rapidly develop, and I think my Council were very wise and more than justified in embarking on this scheme, and time will prove, although very expensive, what a wise decision it was.

### **Housing.**

Great progress has again been made, and I should think with the coming of Private Enterprise the back of this problem has been well broken, but there is no doubt the Council have done a magnificent job of work.

I have much pleasure in presenting the Sanitary Inspector's (Mr. L. H. White) Report.

### **Water Supplies.**

The East Devon Water Board is now controlling the Public Water Supplies in the District, with the exception of the Private Supplies at Axmouth, Beer, Compton, Lyme Regis, Water Co., and Feoffees, Colyton. All these supplies have remained satisfactory throughout the year from a Bacteriological point of view, and there has been no shortage of water.

### **Meat and Other Foods.**

Killing and Inspection is still being carried out at the Regional Abattoir at Tiverton. During the year, several inspections have been made at Food shops and stores, and during the year the following was condemned:—Tin Food, 231lbs.; Poultry, 105lbs.; Fish, 24lbs.; Home-killed Meat, 445lbs.

### **Food Poisoning and Outbreaks.**

There were seven outbreaks of Food Poisoning at Beer. One resulting in death. This was due to meat pies being sold in the district which had been produced at another food premises outside the district.

### **Refuse Collection.**

The Refuse Collection extending over the whole district has now been in operation nine months, and is working quite satisfactorily. A new 12 cubic yard KARRIER has been used to do the work. The main problem is to find a suitable area for controlled tipping, and if this can be found, it is hoped that the Public Health Committee will continue to increase their enthusiasm for improved Refuse Control Facilities, and perhaps an increased collection.

### **Rodent Control.**

For an eight-month period during the year there was no Rodent Operator, although treatments were carried out where necessary by my department. A Rodent Operator has again been appointed and besides routine control, survey of the district has once again been resumed.

### **Housing.**

Progress continues with new house building and a fine record by the Council, for the number of houses erected, still maintained. The main brunt of re-housing has now been broken, but there is still much to do before any drastic action can be taken with matters arising from the Rural Housing Survey, which is once again in progress.

At the Chard Road Camp (which is now known as Millwey Rise), and which houses practically 200 families, great steps have been made towards re-housing the occupants and improving their accommodation. Nissen Huts have been demolished, and there is every possibility that before the end of this summer all Nissen Huts will have been completely demolished.

### **Inspection of Dwelling Housing during the year.**

1. Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	176
2. Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... ... ...	3
3. Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	1

### **Remedy of Defects without service of formal notices.**

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Local Authority or its officers ... ... ...	47
---	----

### Verminous Premises.

Number of verminous premises treated during the year was two. Re-visits were made until eradication had been completed. Although cases of this nature are few, great difficulty arises as there are no proper bathing facilities available in the District, and the nearest disinfecter is at Honiton, which necessitates the carrying of verminous clothing 14 miles, and the need for special containers for packing purposes. The treatment includes the use of liquid and powder insecticides, but without proper facilities complete eradication is most difficult.

### Factories Act, 1937.

Factories	No. on Register	No. of Inspections	Informal Notices served
Mechanical ...	... 49	23	6
Non-Mechanical ...	... 7	3	1
	—	—	—
Total	56	26	7
Particulars	Defects found	Defects remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector
Want of Cleanliness ...	7	7	-
Sanitary Conveniences :			
1. Unsuitable ...	-	-	-
2. Not separate for sexes ...	-	-	-
3. Insufficient ...	-	-	-
4. Other Offences ...	-	-	-
	—	—	—
Total	... 7	7	-

### General Inspections.

Dairies ...	...	...	...	5
Disinfection following Infectious Diseases			...	2
Water Supplies ...	...	...	...	5
Inspection of drains ...	...	...	...	35
Food & Drugs Act, Section 14 ...	...	...	...	28
Condemned Food, Visits and Re-visits ...			...	53
Petroleum Inspections ...	...	...	...	49
Public Health Act, Section 269 (Caravans)			...	42
Shops Act ...	...	...	...	18
Miscellaneous (Explosives, Requisitioned Houses, &c.)			...	12
Inspections Public Health Act, Section 91, &c.	...	238		

# HONITON BOROUGH.

Area	...	...	3,134 acres
Population	...	...	4,596
Rateable Value	...	...	£32,471
Penny Rate produces	...	...	£131 6s. 9d.

### Deaths.

Number of Deaths registered from all causes :—

1951—(20 Males, 23 Females)	...	...	43
1952—(24 Males, 23 Females)	...	...	47

### Live Births.

Number of Live Births registered :—

1951—(32 Males, 28 Females)	...	...	60
0 illegitimate births were registered.			
1952—(31 Males, 18 Females)	...	...	49
2 illegitimate births were registered.			

### Still Births.

1951—2 Still Births were registered	...	...	2
1952—2 Still Births were registered	...	...	2

### Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

1951—1 Death was registered	...	...	1
1952—2 Deaths were registered	...	...	2

### Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age.

1951—1 death was registered	...	...	1
1952—2 deaths were registered	...	...	2

### Infectious Disease.

The following cases were notified in 1952 :—

	1951	1952
Scarlet Fever	...	0
Diphtheria	...	0
Whooping Cough	...	6
Measles	...	201
Erysipelas	...	0
Pneumonia	...	10
Puerpural Pyrexia	...	1
Poliomyelitis	...	0
Food Poisoning	...	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	218	13

As will be seen by the Infectious Disease Chart, Honiton has had an exceptionally good year in freedom from Infectious Disease. There were no epidemics of any description, and the general health of the Borough maintained a very high standard throughout the year.

As you will observe, no cases of Diphtheria or Poliomyelitis were notified to me, and Diphtheria seems now to belong to the by-gone days.

*Deaths.*—The number of deaths registered were 47 as compared with 43 in 1951.

*Birth Rate.*—49 births were recorded in 1952, as against 60 in 1951, which is a very large decrease.

The chief causes of death were:—

		1951	1952
Tuberculosis, Respiratory	...	0	2
Other Tuberculosis Infective and Parasitic Diseases	0	1	
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	0	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung	...	0	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	...	0	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	...	0	1
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	1	2
Leukaemia	...	0	1
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	...	8	9
Other Heart Disease	...	9	8
Other Circulatory Disease	...	5	1
Pneumonia	...	1	1
Bronchitis	...	2	4
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	...	0	1
Hyperplasia of Prostate	...	0	0
Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	...	5	6
Motor Accident	...	3	1
Coronary Disease	...	3	5
Hypertension with Heart Disease	...	2	1
Influenza	...	2	0
Ulcer of Stomach	...	1	1
Pregnancy, Childbirth Abortion	...	1	0
All other Accidents	...	0	1
Suicide	...	0	1
		<hr/> 43	<hr/> 47

#### Food Poisoning.

The two cases of Food Poisoning were very mild, and due to eating tainted crab. Both cases quickly recovered under treatment.

During the year complaints were received by me that in some Food Shops in the Borough assistants were not too clean in their habits, for instance, the wearing of dirty aprons when handling food. I personally contacted several shops where I noticed this, and I can report a great improvement; also the Surveyor has instructions to make constant inspections of shops, to see that proper clothes are

worn especially when dealing with food. I would point out to my Council that Food Poisoning, which is a very serious illness, seems to be very definitely on the increase, and it behoves all of us to see that food is handled in an hygienic manner. One particularly dirty habit I have observed myself, and that is to see an assistant lick her fingers in order to pick up a piece of wrapping paper easily. Nothing is more liable to spread disease than this very dirty habit when done to wrap up any food-stuff.

### **Sewerage Works.**

These seem now to be working to full capacity, and in the near future the Council will have to consider enlarging the Works.

### **Water Supplies.**

As these are now handled by the East Devon Water Board I have no comment to make, except to say the supplies to the Borough have been ample and of a very high degree of purity.

### **Bathing Facilities.**

The position is exactly the same as last year, and although nothing would give me greater pleasure than to throw the Baths open to all and sundry, and I would also add the Honiton Swimming Club, who I have no doubt feel I am very arbitrary in excluding them, yet, as I have said so many times, the Bath is much too small to allow anybody but a limited number to use them, and then only those children who wish to learn to swim. There is no proper system of Chlorination, and no Filtration can be done, in fact the Chlorination is as crude as it possibly could be.

I have great pleasure in adding Mr. Bailey's Report as follows :

### **Annual Report of Sanitary Inspector for the year 1952.**

#### **Housing**

Permanent Pre-War Houses	...	136
Permanent Post-War Houses	...	152
Temporary Post-War Houses	...	12
Total ...	...	300
No. of Houses erected by Private Enterprise	...	6

The Council's Housing Programme is proceeding well. 24 Houses have been completed at the Marwood Estate, and a further 27 are well on the way to completion. The Council are now considering further development in the Streamers Meadows area.

Included in the Marwood Estate development, are three bungalows for elderly persons.

### **General Housing Inspections under the Housing Acts**

94 Housing Inspections were made under the Housing Acts in respect of sub-standard property. A number of families have been re-housed and informal notices served in respect of the properties.

The Council are considering the making of demolition orders in respect of three properties.

There are still two families to be re-housed in respect of property which was condemned in the Vine Yard.

During the forthcoming year it is proposed to carry out inspections of properties with a view to scheduling for demolition and clearance.

#### **Water Supplies.**

The Water Supplies of the Borough were taken over by the East Devon Water Board in June of this year.

#### **Sewage Disposal.**

The Sewerage Works have been functioning satisfactorily in that a good effluent is being obtained, but the rate of storm water discharge is high. It appears that new filter beds will be required in the future and alterations carried out to the works in order to ease this situation. The Council have appointed an Engineer to submit reports on this matter.

The old sludge beds are at present being reconstructed. Provision is also being made for washing accommodation for use of the employees.

At the present time there is an accumulation of sludge at the works. No provision has been made for removal of this during the last 15 years, and serious consideration should be given to this matter. From a Public Health point of view the condition is very unsatisfactory.

#### **Refuse Collection and Disposal.**

Regularly weekly refuse collections are now carried out covering the whole of the built-up areas. Fortnightly collections in other parts of the area. Salvage of paper and metals is still continued, and although the price of these materials has decreased the continuance of salvage and baling of paper is still worth while.

The new controlled refuse tip is in good condition, and it is estimated that the tipping site will last for at least a period of seven years. The tipping is carried out on land owned by the Council adjacent to the sewage works.

Street sweeping is carried out in the Town area and in this respect comment must be made as to the amount of litter which is thrown about the streets, not only in the summer months when visitors are frequent, but generally throughout the year.

The Police have co-operated well in this matter, and proceedings have been taken, but more and frequent action is necessary. I have noticed that it is the adult population who are the worst offenders.

The litter is not confined to the Town area, but it is also prevalent on the trunk road approaches.

Drastic action must be taken to educate the "Litter Bug." I would suggest that this problem is not only a local one and that the County Council appoint litter inspectors whose duty it would be to educate and, if necessary, institute proceedings in this matter throughout the County.

### Rodent Control.

Until this year the Council employed a Rat Man whose responsibility was the destruction of rats in the Town and also to carry out work in the Rural Area. The Council have now discontinued this service on the grounds of economy.

It was estimated that 3,000 rats per year were killed or destroyed when the rat man was employed. The Ministry of Food are at present concerned that no action is being taken on this matter.

### Public Conveniences.

The Public Conveniences are an asset to the Town, and it may be that the Council will provide additional conveniences at a future date. Has anyone an answer to the problem of male adults who will persist in inscribing rude words on walls of public conveniences? This action costs ratepayers' money in work of "Blotting Out."

### Slaughterhouses.

There are five slaughterhouses in the Town. One is in use at the present time under licence from the Ministry of Food for occasional slaughtering.

### Meat and Food Inspections.

Approximately 10 cwts. of various foodstuffs have been condemned as unfit for consumption during the year. The majority of this food was tinned.

### Ice Cream Regulations.

All premises selling ice cream were registered. There is no ice cream manufactured by the "Hot Mix" method. Samples of ice cream are taken by the County Sampling Officer, and no cases of contaminated ice cream have been reported.

### Bakehouses.

There are seven bakehouses in the Town. Inspections have been made, notices given where necessary. Generally the premises are satisfactory.

### Clean Food Regulations.

Clean Food Byelaws are in operation in the Borough and all premises where food is sold have been inspected. Generally speaking, the standard of cleanliness is good, but there is room for improvement in some instances. Notices have been given in respect of minor items.

The general co-operation of all traders in respect of carrying out the regulations has been good.

### Food Poisoning.

Two cases of suspected food poisoning were notified, but on investigation these proved negative. It appears that the illness was caused by eating "Watery" Crab.

### Factories and Workshops.

There are 40 Factories and Workshops entered in the Register. 10 Premises are registered for outworkers.

Notices have been given in five cases respecting cleanliness and sanitary accommodation. In all these instances the owners were co-operative, and complied with the notices immediately. There are no outstanding complaints from H.M. Inspector of Factories.

### **Swimming Pool.**

The small Swimming Pool owned by the Council has been restricted for use by the direction of the Medical Officer of Health. In my opinion the use of this Swimming Pool should be discontinued, as there is no real means of satisfactory Chlorination. Chlorination has to be done on a "hit and miss" method, and more often than not over-chlorination results in order to effect sterilisation of the water. No cases of infection have yet arisen in respect of this Pool, but I feel that the position is very unstable unless a satisfactory Chlorination Plant is installed. The cost of providing a Plant would be out of all proportion to the revenue obtained on such a small Pool.

### **General.**

Very few nuisances have been dealt with during the year, and no statutory notices have been served.

Several licensed premises have built new, or improved, their sanitary accommodation, and a complete new range of conveniences has been constructed at the Honiton Pottery.

## HONITON RURAL DISTRICT.

Area	...	...	61,265 acres
Population	...	...	6,855
No. of Parishes	...	...	22
Rateable Value	...	...	£30,119
Penny Rate Produces	...	...	£122

### Infectious Disease.

		1951	1952
Scarlet Fever	...	0	4
Diphtheria	...	0	0
Whooping Cough	...	22	27
Measles	...	190	3
Pneumonia	...	7	5
Erysipelas	...	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	0	0
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	2	2
Food Poisoning	...	0	3
		<hr/> 221	<hr/> 44

### Deaths.

Number of deaths registered from all causes :—

1951—(52 Males, 51 Females)	...	...	103
1952—(46 Males, 33 Females)	...	...	79

### Live Births.

Number of Live Births registered :—

1951—(60 Males, 54 Females)	...	...	114
1952—(72 Males, 51 Females)	...	...	123

The number of illegitimate births registered was 4, and are included in the above total of 123.

### Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

1951—1 death was registered (1 Male)	...	...	1
1952—0 death was registered	...	...	0

### Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age.

1951—0 deaths were registered	...	...	0
1952—0 deaths were registered	...	...	0

### Still Births.

1951—Number of Still Births registered was 5 (1 illegitimate).  
 1952—Number of Still Births registered was 3 (0 illegitimate).

*Births.*—These show an increase, 123 as compared with 114 in 1951, but exactly the same as 1950.

*Deaths.*—The number of Deaths registered were 79, as compared with 103 in 1951. The chief causes of death were :—

		1951	1952
Respiratory Tuberculosis	...	3	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	3	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung	...	0	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	...	1	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	...	0	1
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	10	8
Leukaemia	...	0	0
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	...	21	9
Coronary Disease, Angina	...	8	10
Hypertension with Heart Disease	...	4	0
Other Heart Disease	...	16	20
Other Circulatory Disease	...	4	1
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	...	1	0
Pneumonia	...	7	0
Bronchitis	...	5	2
Influenza	...	3	0
Duodenal Ulcer	...	0	3
Hyperplasia of Prostate	...	0	3
Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	...	9	11
Motor Accidents	...	1	0
Suicide	...	0	0
All Other Accidents	...	4	1
Nephritis	...	2	2
Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases	...	1	1
Diarrhoea	...	0	1
		<hr/> 103	<hr/> 79

### Infectious Disease.

Compared with 1951, Honiton Rural have had quite a good year in freedom from Infectious Disease. Twenty-seven cases of Whooping Cough comprised the majority of cases, and cases of Measles dropped to the very low level of three cases.

Two cases of Poliomyelitis were recorded, both Paralytic. One case occurred at Up-Ottery which was unfortunately very severe in type; the other at Widworthy, but fortunately in this case of a very mild type.

There were also, and which is very unusual, three cases of Food Poisoning reported. Two cases occurring at Broadhembury, and one at Weston, near Sidmouth; all three cases were mild, and made quick recoveries.

I am again glad to note that Diphtheria is again absent; we have now been many years since we had a case.

### **Water Supplies.**

This is now entirely run by the East Devon Water Board, but I am very glad to record the fact that the Water Scheme for Northleigh, and brought into being by my Council, has been completed, and Northleigh is enjoying a supply of Water which unfortunately has to be highly Chlorinated.

### **Sewage Schemes.**

Urgent schemes for Widworthy and part of Monkton are still held up by the Ministry. I do wish they could be persuaded to allow these two small schemes to be proceeded with, as they really are most urgent and essential to the health and well-being of the Villages concerned.

### **Council Houses.**

Steady progress has been made, and I think the back of Council building on a large scale is nearly over. During the year the following Houses were built:—Luppitt, 8; Payhembury, 6; and Rawridge, 4.

I have pleasure in adding the Sanitary Inspector's Report for 1952:—

### **Water Supplies.**

Up to April, 1952, this Council administered the various water supplies in the area under delegated powers from the East Devon Water Board. These powers ceased on April 1st, 1952, and all maintenance of water undertakings is now carried out by the Board.

The Council put in a private supply for the Council Houses at Awliscombe during the year. Previously it had been necessary to cart water twice a week by road to supply these houses, and this new scheme, which brings water by gravity from a reservoir on a neighbouring farm, has effected a considerable financial saving.

18 water samples were taken from private premises.

### **Sewerage.**

Public Inquiries were held into the proposed sewerage schemes for Wilmington and Monkton. In both cases the schemes were rejected on the grounds that the cost was excessive, and that it would not be an economic proposition to proceed with them. The Council submitted an amended scheme for Wilmington in June, 1952, and although every effort has been made to obtain approval to this scheme, which is urgently required on public health grounds, no decision has yet been given by the Minister, although it is hoped that some action will be taken shortly.

With regard to other schemes which were prepared in outline form in 1951, no further action has been taken as they are not so urgent, on public health grounds, as Wilmington.

### **Refuse Collection.**

The system of refuse collection was re-organized early in 1952 to provide a more efficient service, and by utilizing a second man part-time, both on collection and on the refuse tips, it has been found possible to carry out reasonably effective controlled tipping on the three tips at present in use, and also to reduce the time of collection.

### **Rodent Control.**

The Council now employs its own rodent operator, who also maintains the sewage disposal plants. The Council's commitments on rodent control have been carried out effectively during the year, and the necessary treatment put in hand on refuse tips and sewers. No heavy infestations have been noted. Various private properties were treated during the year.

### **... Housing.**

A total of 19 houses were inspected under the Housing Acts during the year. It has not proved possible to put work in hand on the Rural Housing Survey.

### **Visits.**

A summary of visits carried out during the year is as follows:

Water Supplies	...	219
Drainage & Sewerage	...	209
Refuse Collection	...	10
Refuse Disposal	...	26
Rodent Control	...	3
Building Inspections	...	269
Town & Country Planning	...	117
Miscellaneous Inspections	...	89

# SEATON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Area	...	...	1,190 acres
Population	...	...	2,815
Rateable value	...	...	£33,873
Penny Rate produces	...	...	£138 1s. 0d.

### Deaths.

1951—(35 Males, 33 Females)	...	...	68
1952—(27 Males, 30 Females)	...	...	57

### Live Births.

Number of Live Births registered :—

1951—(16 Males, 13 Females)	...	...	29
2 illegitimate births are included in the 29 registered.			
1952—(14 Males, 13 Females)	...	...	27
0 illegitimate births were registered.			

### Still Births.

1951—0 were registered	...	...	0
1952—0 were registered	...	...	0

### Deaths of Infants under 1 year.

1951—0 were registered	...	...	0
1952—0 were registered	...	...	0

### Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age.

1951—0 were registered	...	...	0
1952—0 were registered	...	...	0

### Infectious Disease.

The following cases were notified during the year :—

	1951	1952
Scarlet Fever	3	2
Puerpural Pyrexia	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	5
Measles	105	2
Pneumonia	2	6
Acute Poliomyelitis	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0
	110	15

*Deaths.* The number of deaths registered from all causes were 57 as compared with 68 in 1951. The causes of death were:

		1951	1952
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	2	2
Other Tubercular Disease	...	1	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	...	1	1
Malignant Neoplasm, Bronchus	...	2	0
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	...	0	1
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	...	7	3
Diabetes	...	0	2
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	...	9	6
Coronary Disease, Angina	...	13	10
Hypertension with Heart Disease	...	2	3
Other Heart Disease	...	20	12
Other Circulatory Disease	...	0	1
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	...	1	0
Ulcer of Stomach	...	1	3
Pneumonia	...	0	1
Bronchitis	...	0	0
Gastritis	...	1	0
Nephritis	...	1	0
Hyperplasia of Prostate	...	2	2
Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	...	5	4
Accidents	...	0	3
Suicide	...	0	1
Influenza	...	0	1
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		68	57

### **Infectious Disease.**

Again it gives me very great pleasure in being able to record a very excellent Health Report for Seaton. As you will see from the Infectious Diseases Chart, there were six cases of Pneumonia. These occurred during the Influenza epidemic, and were all in aged people. The five cases of Whooping Cough was exceedingly small, considering there was a large amount of this disease in No. 2 Area. Looking at the Chart I think we can be more than satisfied with the health conditions in this seaside resort.

### **Housing.**

I note with great satisfaction that, after having been hung up so long, Housing is now making marked progress, and the big scheme is making good progress in Elizabeth Road. Contracts for 20 were placed, and 10 have been completed and occupied, and it will not be long before the whole 20 are finished and occupied. This will help a long way to relieving the shortage, but as we are rather behind with our building programme, I hope further houses will soon be on the way. No doubt private enterprise is now going to relieve the burden of building houses by the Councils to a considerable extent, but will not fully meet the demand.

### Water Supply.

The new chlorination plant, which is very modern and up-to-date, has been installed and is functioning very satisfactorily. I am very glad to feel that the water supply, which in times of flood was in risk of pollution, is now safe.

It is with great pleasure that I submit with my report the report of Mr. Bradley, who has put in an enormous amount of work during the past year, and has most efficiently carried out his duties, and to me it is a very great pleasure indeed to work with him.

### Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector's Report.

As your Sanitary Inspector, the following visits were made during the year :

Routine Inspections (Public Health & Housing Acts)	150
Inspection of Dairies ... ... ...	5
Disinfection following Infectious Disease ... ...	4
Detailed Housing Inspections ... ...	11
Visits with regard to Water Supply and Sampling	13
Inspection of New Buildings and Alterations ...	64
Inspection and/or Testing of Drains ...	31
Inspection of Ice Cream Establishments ...	15
Examination of Unsound Food and Inspection of Food Shops ... ... ...	16
Rodent Investigations and Treatments ... ...	20
Petroleum Installations ... ... ...	8
Factories and Workshops Inspections ...	30

### Housing.

The 20 houses in Elizabeth Road are nearing completion. 10 of them were actually finished and occupied in 1952. Three new houses were built for private occupation, and one house was converted into three flats. Two hutments erected without permission and intended for living accommodation were demolished. One house was declared unfit for occupation and a demolition order issued.

### Water Supply.

A new 3in. main has been laid to the East side of Burrow Road and also in Stock Lane.

The quality of the water has remained constant, and the Analyst's reports were very satisfactory both chemically and bacteriologically. New chlorination plant was installed at the works.

Warnings were issued that our reserves were running rather low in July, but it did not become necessary to curtail supply. The wastage from corroded service pipes and fittings was rather high.

In August we were visited by an Engineering Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and a statistical report was prepared.

### **Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.**

The work of constructing the new works to serve the Elizabeth Road area was started in August and is still proceeding. The Council decided to call in a Consulting Engineer to advise them in regard to the existing system of sewers, and the measures necessary to avoid flooding in times of storm, and also with regard to existing outfall to the Sea, and possible alternatives.

### **Food.**

A large quantity of tinned food was condemned. Compared with previous years the amount of such food is on the increase.

### **Refuse Collection and Salvage.**

The system is as in my last report. The Incinerator is so close to our new housing site that its early removal is necessary. Its condition is such that it is doubtful whether it can be successfully removed to the new site, and a new Incinerator may be necessary.

We do sell metal and rags, but it has been almost impossible to sell paper.

### **Public Health Nuisances.**

There were several minor matters dealt with by preliminary notices, chiefly with regard to faulty drains and houses not waterproof. There were two serious nuisances from large septic tanks in Colyford Road, but this was cleared up with the co-operation of the several owners of properties affected.

### **Cemetery Ground.**

The search is still on for suitable ground, and this matter is now more urgent than it was at the time of making my last report.

### **Rodents.**

We have had no major infestations. We are still troubled with rats in our sewers, and periodic treatment is carried out.

### **Factories and Workshops.**

I have nothing of importance to report under this heading.

Your obedient servant,

DUNCOMBE STEELE-PERKINS,

*Medical Officer of Health.*





